STUMPTOWN™
GREG RUCKA • JUSTIN GREENWOOD • RYAN HILL
The Case of the King of Clubs
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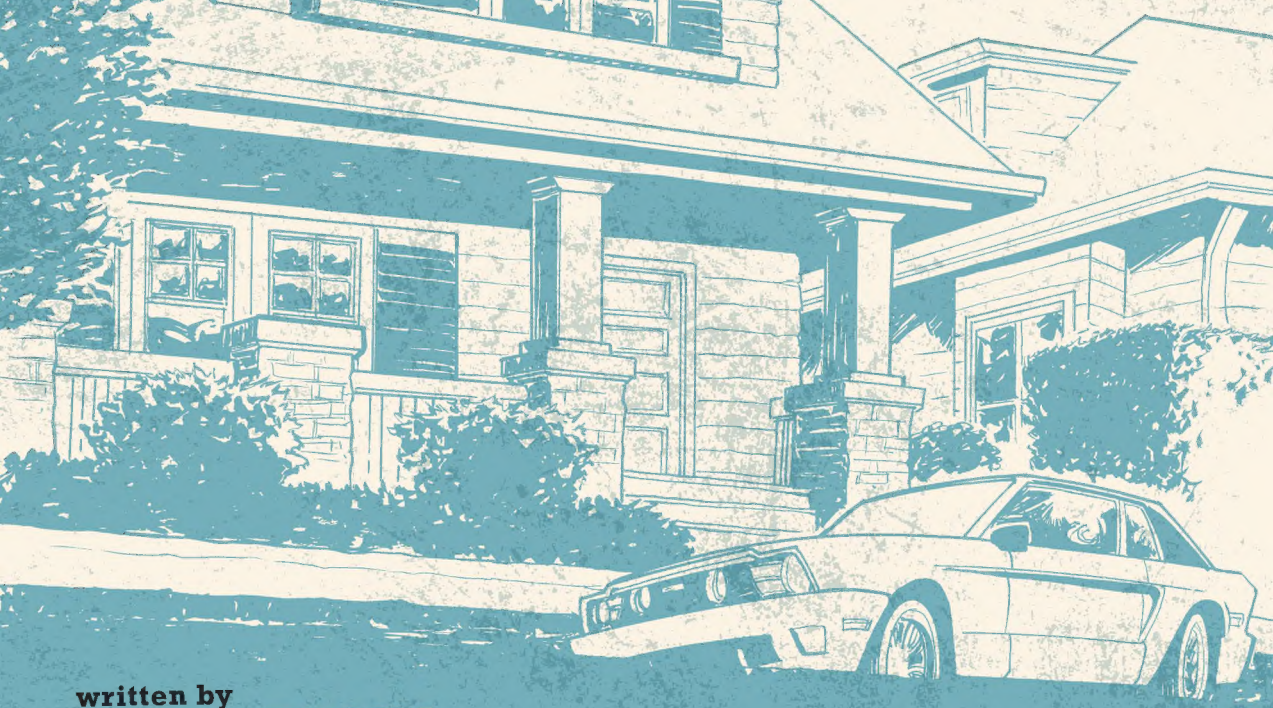

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STUMPTOWN™

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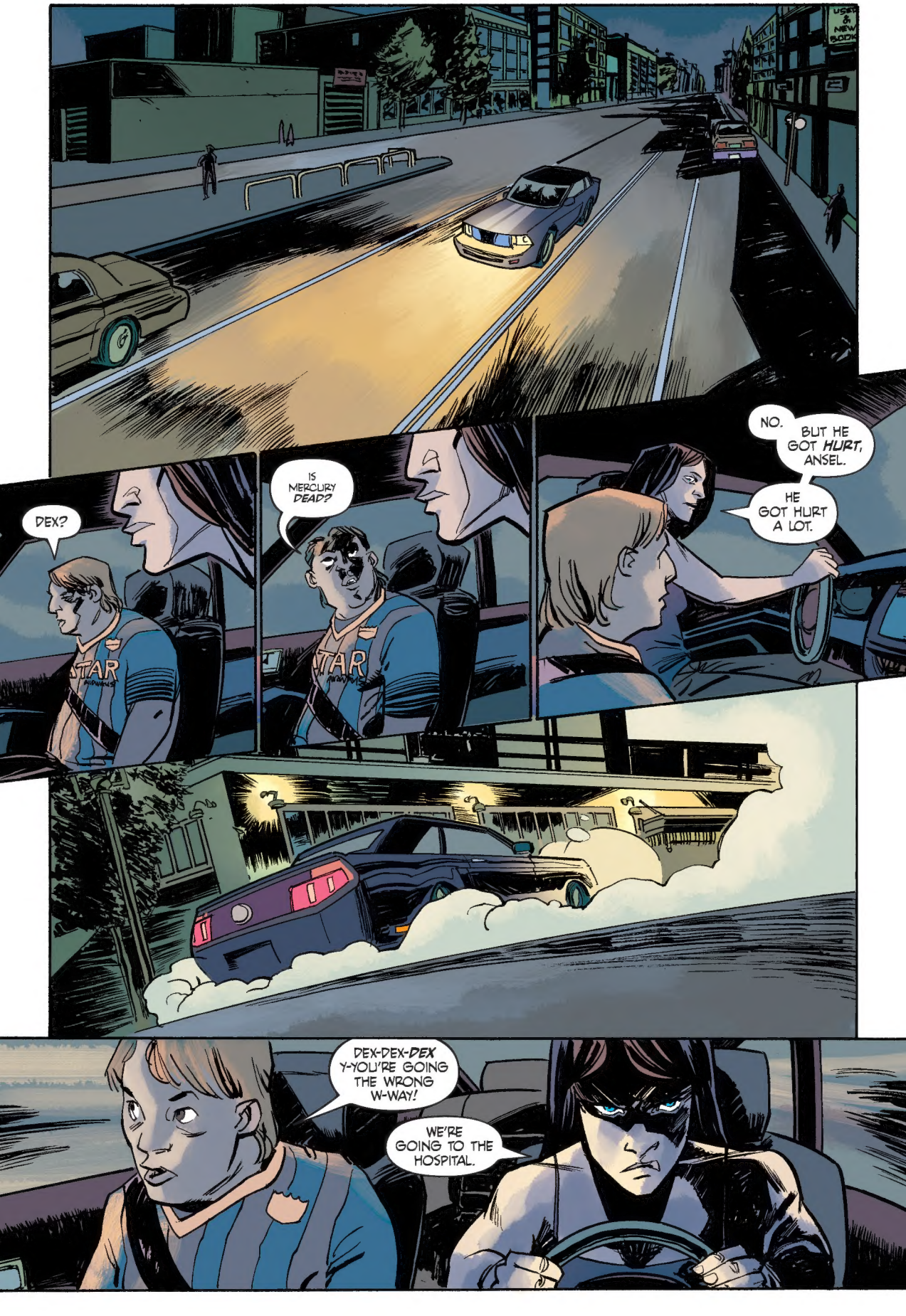
ICE
QAT
SOS
MISS PARIOS, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
I'M SORRY, WHAT?
I WAS ASKING IF MISTER RAMSEY HAD ANYONE WE SHOULD CONTACT? ANY FAMILY?
NO, HE... HE'S BEEN DIVORCED FOR LIKE, TWENTY YEARS.
NO ONE, NO.
AMBULANCE
NCE

LOOK, I REALLY NEED TO GET MY BROTHER BACK HOME.
YOU'VE GOT MY NUMBER, AND I'M A FRIEND OF DETECTIVE HOFFMAN'S, SHE KNOWS HOW TO FIND ME.
CAN WE... CAN WE DO THIS LATER?
YEAH, OKAY. SOMEONE WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS, MISS PARIOS.
THANKS. THANK YOU.
WE'RE GONNA GO HOME, OKAY, ANSEL?
OH-OKAY.
PORTLAND PO
LAND POLICE
251182


USED & NEW BOOKS
DEX?
IS MERCURY *DEAD?*
NO. BUT HE GOT *HURT*, ANSEL.
HE GOT HURT A LOT.
DEX-DEX-*DEX* Y-YOU'RE GOING THE WRONG W-WAY!
WE'RE GOING TO THE HOSPITAL.

HEY...

...YOU LOOK LIKE YOU COULD USE A CUP OF COFFEE.
THANKS.
SURE.
I'M BEN. "OLD BEN," SECTION ONE-OH-EIGHT.
EASY COMPANY.
THAT'S US.
I'M DEX. TWO-OH-SEVEN.
ORIGINAL NORTH END NOISE.
OLDER THAN SOME, NOT AS OLD AS OTHERS.

THEY SAY ANYTHING 'BOUT HOW MERCURY'S DOING?
INTRACRANIAL HEMORRHAGE, MULTIPLE FRACTURES, MOSTLY RIBS, SOME FINGERS.
IT'S THE BLEEDING IN HIS SKULL THAT'S GOT THEM WORRIED.
HE HASN'T REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.
HOW'D YOU ALL HEAR ABOUT IT?
HUH?
OH, YOU KNOW. WORD MOVES FAST.
WE WERE HAVING A FEW PINTS AFTER THE MATCH, SOMEONE SAID SOMETHING, DON'T REMEMBER WHO.
THOUGHT WE'D COME DOWN AND LEND SOME SUPPORT...
...IT'S WHAT WE DO, RIGHT?

YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED?
TO MERCURY, I MEAN?
SOMEONE PUT A BEAT DOWN ON HIM.
COPS HAVE ANY IDEA WHO?
I LOOK LIKE A COP?
HOW THE FUCK SHOULD I KNOW?
SORRY. I'M SORRY.
TIRED.
SURE.
I HEARD A RUMOR...

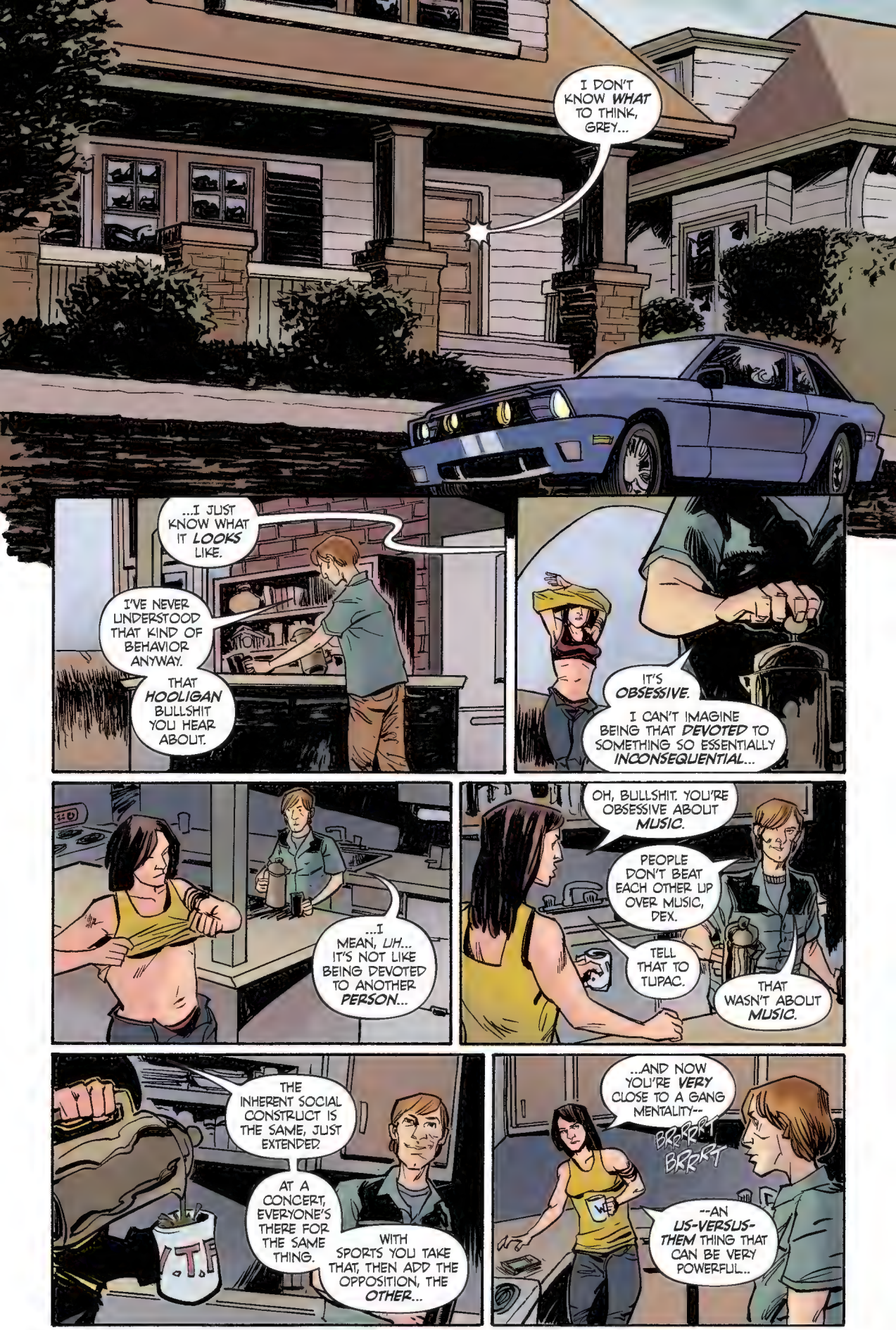
...THAT MAYBE IT WAS SOME FOLKS FROM THAT FISHING VILLAGE UP NORTH WHO HURT HIM.
I WOULDN'T GO AROUND SAYING THINGS LIKE THAT.
I WOULDN'T GO AROUND EVEN HINTING THINGS LIKE THAT.
SOMEONE WHO WENT AROUND SAYING THINGS LIKE THAT BEFORE THE FACTS ARE KNOWN...
...THAT'S SOMEONE WHO'S WALKING AROUND WITH A JERRY CAN AND A MATCH, BEN.
MAYBE, MAYBE.
OR MAYBE THAT'S SOMEONE WHO'S THINKING THAT SOMEONE CAME TO OUR HOUSE AND HURT ONE OF US, AND THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED.
BUT YOU DON'T KNOW THAT. YOU HEARD A RUMOR.
IF IT'S TRUE, YOU DO IGNORE IT. YOU LET THE AUTHORITIES HANDLE IT.
THIS IS BIG SHIT, BEN. THIS IS THE MLS NIGHTMARE.
BECAUSE IF THAT RUMOR IS TRUE, THIS IS EUROPEAN HOOLIGANISM IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST.
IT'S HATE AND VIOLENCE AND SUPPORTER GROUPS THINKING THEY'RE STREET GANGS.
BAD FOR THE CLUB, BAD FOR THE COMMUNITY, BAD FOR THE GAME.
MY BROTHER WAKES UP, TELL HIM I WENT TO GET A SODA.

VZZZT VZZZT
VZZZT
DEEP DEEP
87
2.0
OH, FOR FUCK'S SAKE...
...GIVE, DAMN YOU.
WHAM
WHRRR
THUNK
DUNK

THANK YOU.
WASN'T SO HARD, WAS IT?
MOTHER.
FUCK.
DAMN, YOU'RE LIKE THAT GUY IN THAT MOVIE, AIRPLANE...
...THE ONE WITH A DRINKING PROBLEM.
CK.
110
PARIOS.

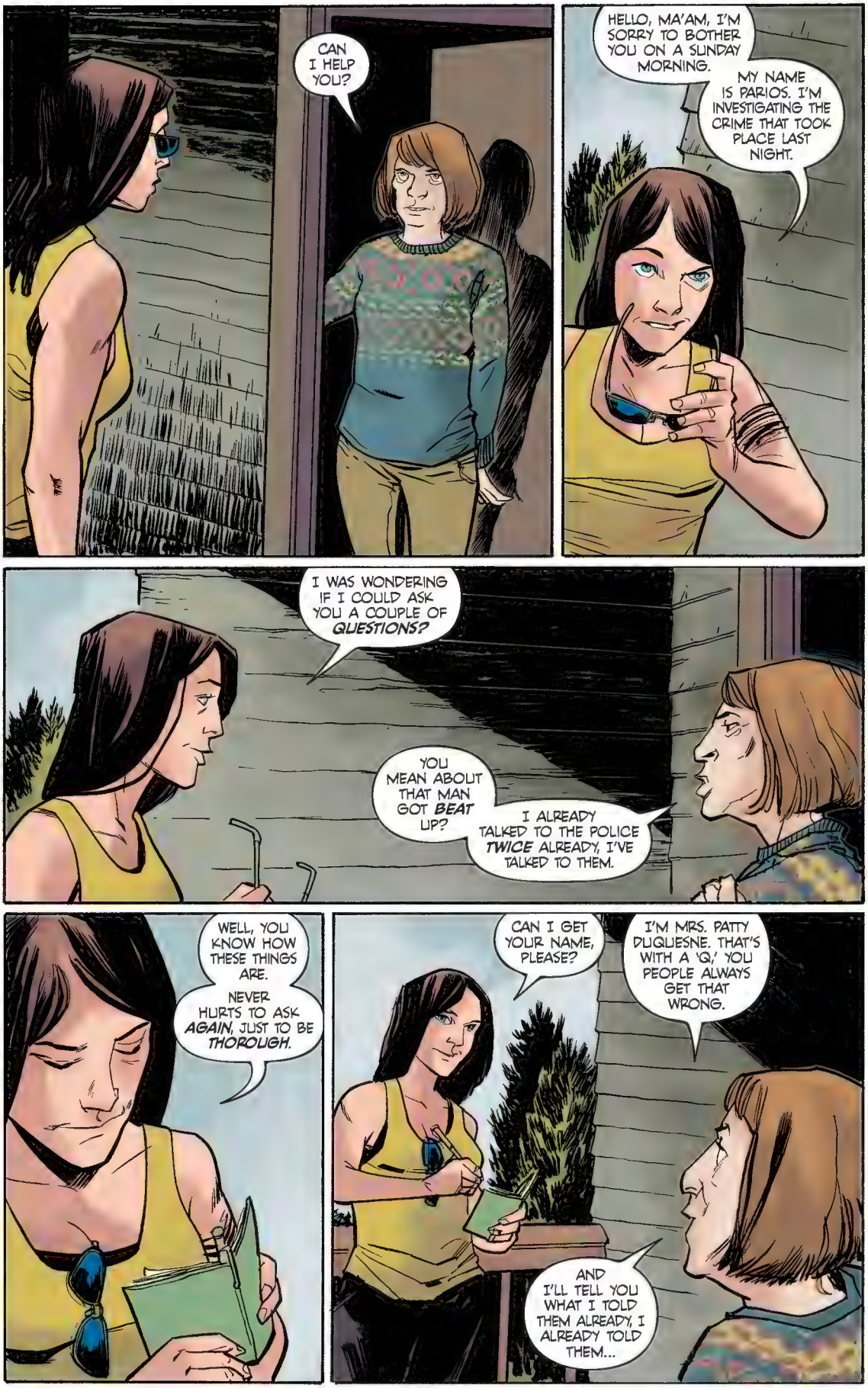
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HEARD A RUMOR.
HEARD YOU MIGHT KNOW THE TRUTH.
LOT OF RUMORS GOING AROUND.
NAH, IT'S THE SAME RUMOR.
YOU DON'T WANT TO BE HERE, CK.
WOULDN'T BE HERE IF I DIDN'T.
RETHINK THAT.
THERE'S A LOT OF ANGRY IN THE WAITING ROOM BACK THERE.
HOW ABOUT RIGHT HERE? YOU CARRYING SOME OF THAT, TOO?
I AM. YES.
YES, I AM.
THEN YOU TOLD ME WHAT I CAME TO FIND OUT.

C'MON, BUDDY.
WAKE UP.
HMMHDEX...
...IS-IS HE AWAKE?
NOT YET. SOON.
WE GOTTA GET YOU HOME, ANSEL. YOU'VE GOT TO GO TO WORK.
Y-YOU DO, TOO.
WHAT?
WORK...
...Y-YOU HAVE TO GO TO W-WORK, TOO.


I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* TO THINK, GREY...
...I JUST KNOW WHAT IT *LOOKS* LIKE.
I'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD THAT KIND OF BEHAVIOR ANYWAY.
THAT *HOOLIGAN* BULLSHIT YOU HEAR ABOUT.
IT'S *OBSESSIVE*.
I CAN'T IMAGINE BEING THAT *DEVOTED* TO SOMETHING SO ESSENTIALLY *INCONSEQUENTIAL*...
...I MEAN, *UH*... IT'S NOT LIKE BEING DEVOTED TO ANOTHER *PERSON*...
OH, BULLSHIT. YOU'RE OBSESSIVE ABOUT *MUSIC*.
PEOPLE DON'T BEAT EACH OTHER UP OVER MUSIC, DEX.
TELL THAT TO TUPAC.
THAT WASN'T ABOUT *MUSIC*.
THE INHERENT SOCIAL CONSTRUCT IS THE SAME, JUST EXTENDED.
AT A CONCERT, EVERYONE'S THERE FOR THE SAME THING.
WITH SPORTS YOU TAKE THAT, THEN ADD THE OPPOSITION, THE *OTHER*...
...AND NOW YOU'RE *VERY* CLOSE TO A GANG MENTALITY--
BRRRRT BRRRT
--AN *US-VERSUS-THEM* THING THAT CAN BE VERY POWERFUL...

...THIS IS DEX...
...OF COURSE I REMEMBER YOU, MISTER BURKE--
--HEH, OKAY, JIMMY...
...FROM THE FRONT OFFICE, SERIOUSLY?...
...DETERMINED, MAYBE, RATHER THAN CREEPY...
...NO, I'D... WELL, YES... TONIGHT?
I... SURE, I'D LIKE THAT...
I JUST GOT ASKED OUT ON A DATE.
THAT'S GREAT, DEX.
...YOU... YOU HAVE PLANS TONIGHT?
JUST PLANNED TO HANG OUT WITH YOU AND ANSEL.
HE AND I'LL GO TO A MOVIE OR SOMETHING, IT'S FINE.
YOU'RE THE BEST, GREY, YOU KNOW THAT?
I GOTTA RUN. THANKS FOR MAKING COFFEE.
ANY TIME.

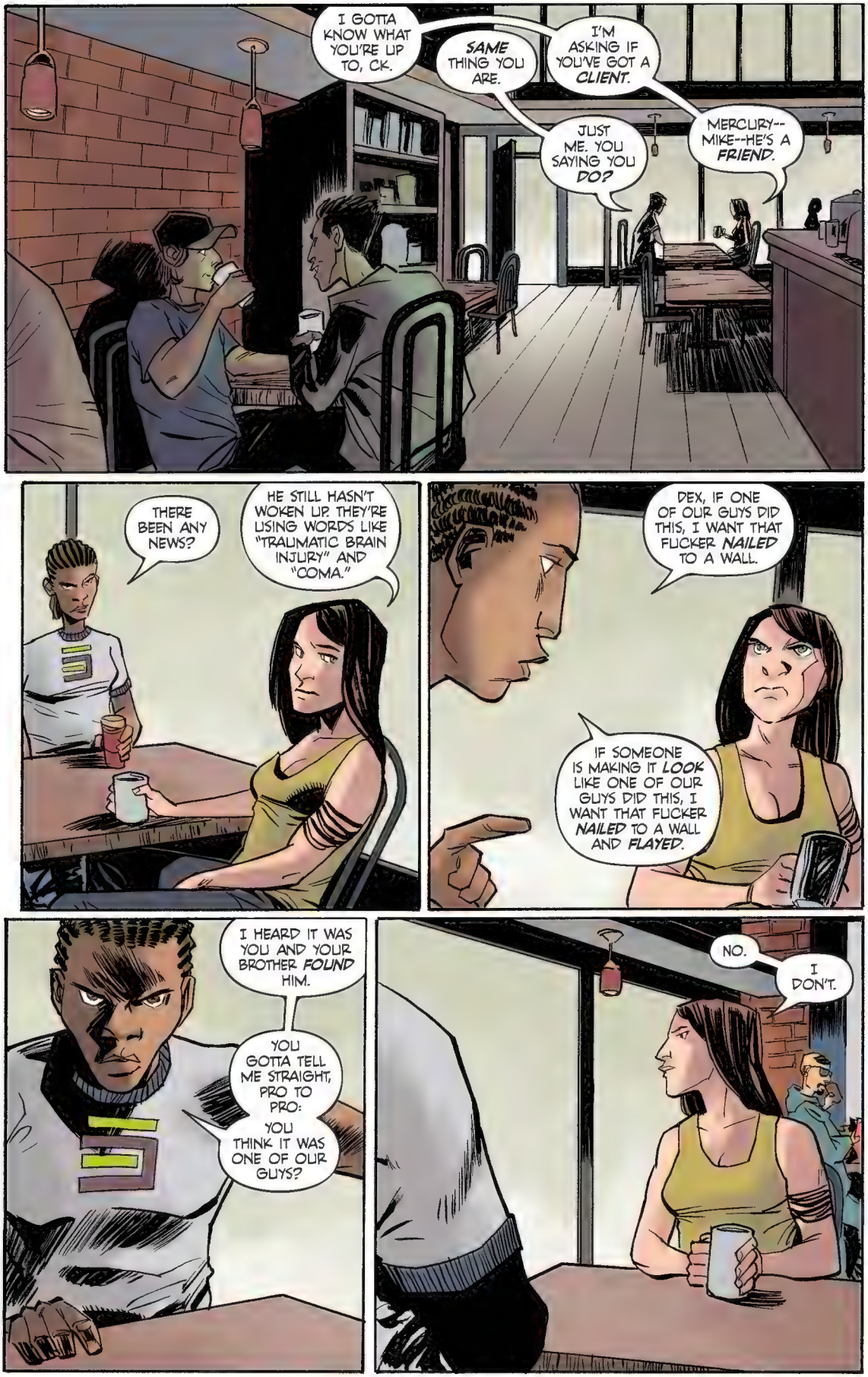
THIS IS TRACY. TALK TO ME.
TRACY, IT'S ME. I NEED YOU TO CALL ME SOON AS YOU CAN. THANKS.

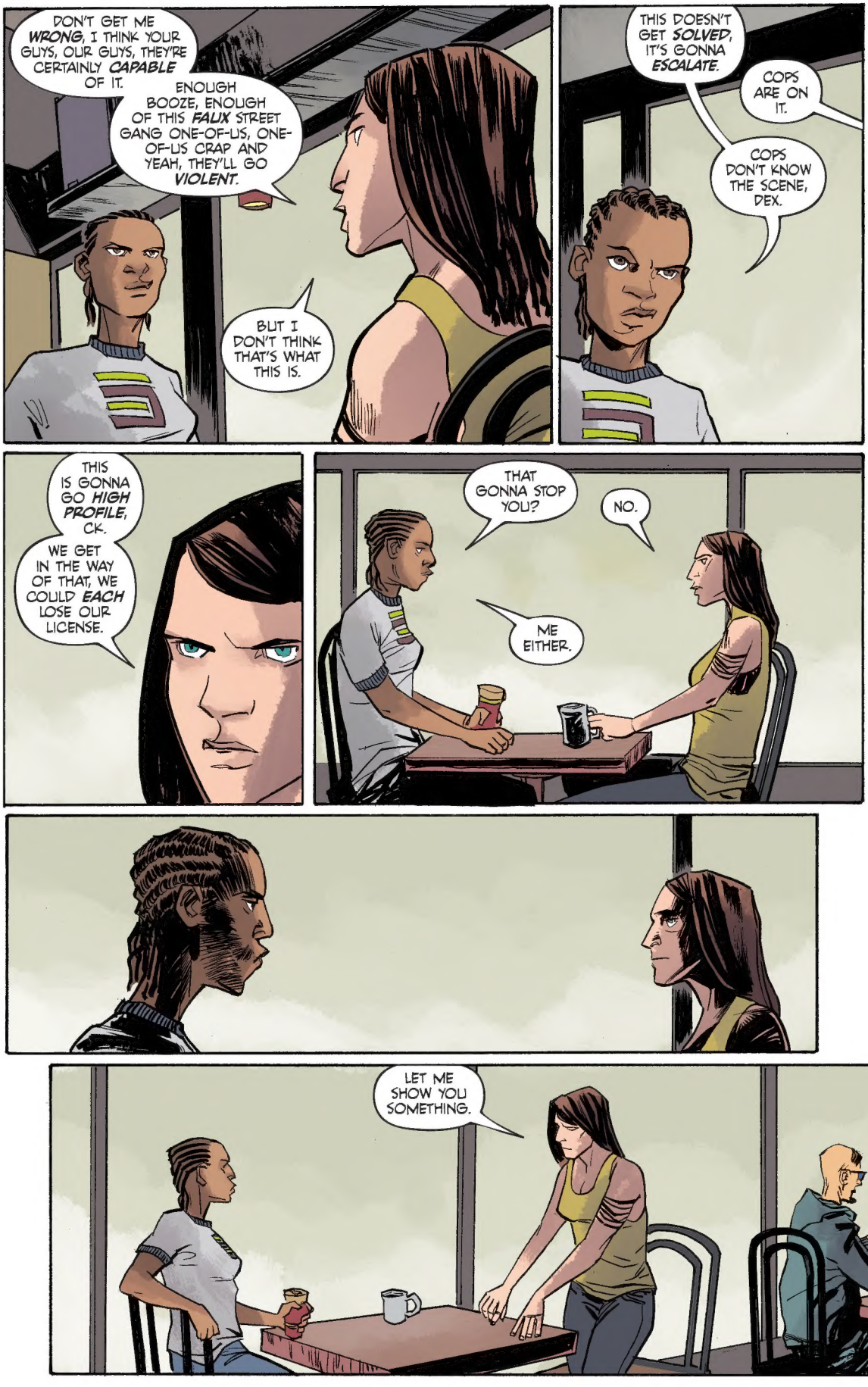

CAN I HELP YOU?
HELLO, MA'AM, I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU ON A SUNDAY MORNING.
MY NAME IS PARIOS. I'M INVESTIGATING THE CRIME THAT TOOK PLACE LAST NIGHT.
I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD ASK YOU A COUPLE OF *QUESTIONS?*
YOU MEAN ABOUT THAT MAN GOT *BEAT* UP?
I ALREADY TALKED TO THE POLICE *TWICE* ALREADY, I'VE TALKED TO THEM.
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW THESE THINGS ARE.
NEVER HURTS TO ASK *AGAIN*, JUST TO BE *THOROUGH*.
CAN I GET YOUR NAME, PLEASE?
I'M MRS. PATTY DUQUESNE. THAT'S WITH A 'Q,' YOU PEOPLE ALWAYS GET THAT WRONG.
AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I TOLD THEM ALREADY, I ALREADY TOLD THEM...

"...I GO TO BED EARLY, I'M AN OLD WOMAN. I GO TO BED EARLY, AND WHENEVER THERE'S A GAME I HAVE TO USE MY EAR PLUGS.
"YOU WOULD NOT, YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE THE NOISE, MISS PARIOS, ON MY LIFE.
"WHEN IT WAS BASEBALL, IT WAS NEVER THAT LOUD ON MY LIFE.
"I DID NOT HEAR ANYTHING, NOT A THING.
"WHY, THE FIRST POLICEMAN, HE SAID HE HAD TO KNOCK ON MY DOOR FOR TEN MINUTES BEFORE HE COULD ROUSE ME.
"I WISH I COULD TELL YOU SOMETHING MORE, I TRULY DO.
"BUT THAT IS ALL I HAVE TO TELL YOU, I'M AFRAID."
"I APPRECIATE IT, MRS. DUQUESNE.
"WOULD YOU MIND IF I TOOK A LOOK AROUND?"
"OH, BE MY GUEST...
"...I CAN'T IMAGINE YOU'LL FIND ANYTHING THE REST OF YOU HAVEN'T FOUND ALREADY."

OH, FUCK ME...
...I WOULDN'T, I WERE YOU.
THAT ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR FRIENDLY WARNINGS?
IT'S ME TELLING YOU THAT I ALREADY TALKED TO THE HOME-OWNER.
SHE'S TALKED TO THE COPS, TOO, SO UNLESS YOU'VE GOT A BADGE TO SHOW HER, IT WON'T FLY.
THAT WAS YOUR PLAY? IMPERSONATING AN OFFICER?
SHE NEVER ASKED. SHE'LL SURE AS HELL ASK YOU.
THAT RIGHT? BECAUSE I'M BLACK?
PROBABLY. YOU'RE IN PORTLAND, AFTER ALL. WE'RE TRAGICALLY WHITE.
WE SHOULD PROBABLY TALK.
YEAH, WE PROBABLY SHOULD.

NO ONE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE A DECENT CUP OF COFFEE IN THIS TOWN.
TAVERN
KINGS
COFFEEHOUSE NORTHWEST
CAN YOU MAYBE DROP THE SEATTLE SUPERIORITY THING FOR FIVE MINUTES?
SORRY, GIRLFRIEND. HABIT.
YEAH, WELL THAT KIND OF HABIT MAYBE GOT A MAN BEATEN UNCONSCIOUS LAST NIGHT.
WORDS HAVE POWER.
FIRST, HOLD ONTO THAT MAYBE.
SECOND, I'M AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN. DON'T YOU FUCKING LECTURE ME ABOUT WORDS HAVING POWER.
FAIR POINT.
MY APOLOGY.
ACCEPTED.


I GOTTA KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO, CK.
SAME THING YOU ARE.
I'M ASKING IF YOU'VE GOT A CLIENT.
JUST ME. YOU SAYING YOU DO?
MERCURY--MIKE--HE'S A FRIEND.
THERE BEEN ANY NEWS?
HE STILL HASN'T WOKEN UP. THEY'RE USING WORDS LIKE "TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY" AND "COMA."
DEX, IF ONE OF OUR GUYS DID THIS, I WANT THAT FUCKER NAILED TO A WALL.
IF SOMEONE IS MAKING IT LOOK LIKE ONE OF OUR GUYS DID THIS, I WANT THAT FUCKER NAILED TO A WALL AND FLAYED.
I HEARD IT WAS YOU AND YOUR BROTHER FOUND HIM.
YOU GOTTA TELL ME STRAIGHT, PRO TO PRO: YOU THINK IT WAS ONE OF OUR GUYS?
NO.
I DON'T.


DON'T GET ME WRONG, I THINK YOUR GUYS, OUR GUYS, THEY'RE CERTAINLY CAPABLE OF IT.
ENOUGH BOOZE, ENOUGH OF THIS FAUX STREET GANG ONE-OF-US, ONE-OF-US CRAP AND YEAH, THEY'LL GO VIOLENT.
BUT I DON'T THINK THAT'S WHAT THIS IS.
THIS DOESN'T GET SOLVED, IT'S GONNA ESCALATE.
COPS ARE ON IT.
COPS DON'T KNOW THE SCENE, DEX.
THIS IS GONNA GO HIGH PROFILE, CK.
WE GET IN THE WAY OF THAT, WE COULD EACH LOSE OUR LICENSE.
THAT GONNA STOP YOU?
NO.
ME EITHER.
LET ME SHOW YOU SOMETHING.

COPS MISSED THIS?
DOUBT IT.
WHAT THEY MADE OF IT, THAT'S SOMETHING ELSE.
AND WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT?
THAT THERE WERE THREE OF THEM, AT LEAST.
THAT THEY USED A BAT OR SOMETHING SIMILAR.
AND THAT WHOEVER THE FUCK DID THIS TO MY FRIEND...
...THEY BETTER PRAY THE COPS FIND THEM BEFORE I DO.

THE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES NEXT MONTH...
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The Case of the King of Clubs
Part Three

VEE EMPIRE